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➤BOOK ❖NOTICES.◀

WELLHAUSEN'S HISTORY OF ISRAEL.*

This famous "Prolegomena," which has made such a stir among biblical scholars, is at last accessible to English readers. It has three divisions: History of Worship; History of Tradition; Israel and Judaism. In the first are considered—the Place of Worship; the Sacrifices; the Feasts; the Priests and Levites; the Endowment of the Clergy. The object of the discussion of these topics, as well as of the whole Prolegomena, is to show that Israel, instead of having commenced its national life as a church, began as a state, and that the religious laws and institutions of the Pentateuch were not given entire through Moses at the commencement of Israel's career, but are the growth of centuries, mainly indeed not written until the close of the exile. This startling conclusion is reached first by the consideration of the religious cultus of Israel. An examination of the historical and prophetic books is made, to show that this cultus was by no means uniform. Three stages are discovered, an example of which is seen in the usage respecting the place of worship. During the earlier period of Israel's history, Jehovah was worshiped at different places, and various localities were held sacred, where sacrifices were offered with impunity. This continued until about the time of Josiah, when a reformation took place, and one sanctuary alone was regarded lawful. From that time onward this idea always prevailed, until, by the close of the exile, this was thought to have been the custom from the day of Moses, and according to law given through him. This course of history, which, moreover, is held to be the natural one,—the simple and flexible ritual preceding the complex and rigid,—in its three stages, has a correspondence in the legislation of the Pentateuch. There, three codes are found; the earliest belonging to the narrative of the Jehovist, which embraces about one half of Genesis, and is the source of many of the narratives of the other books, and the legislative elements (Exod. xx.—xxiii., xxxiv.). The second code corresponds with Deuteronomy; and the third, the priestly code, while containing a portion of Genesis, has for its basis Leviticus, with the allied portions of the adjoining books, Exod. xxv.—xl. (except xxxii.—xxxiv.), Num. i.—x., xv.—xix., xxv.—xxxvi., with trifling exceptions. The legislation, now, of the earliest code, that of the Jehovist, is found to correspond to the usage and ideas exhibited in the earliest stage of Israel's history; and that of the other two codes, to those of the following stages. Now, since it may be taken for granted that ordinances "do not merely hang in the air, quite away from or above the solid ground of actuality," each of the three codes is to be assigned to the period to which its legislation corresponds. And the priestly code, the most elaborate, corresponding to the third period, that of the exile and restoration, is there to be assigned,—marking the beginning, not of Israel's history, but of Judaism. This is the conclusion

* PROLEGOMENA TO THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL, with a reprint of the article Israel from the "Encyclopedia Britannica." By Julius Wellhausen, Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Marburg. Translated from the German, under the author's supervision, by J. Sutherland Black, M. A., and Allen Menzies, B. D., with Preface by Prof. W. Robertson Smith. Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black. MDCCCLXXXV. Pp. 552. Price, \$8.00.

reached by an examination of the history and laws of the place of worship, and also of the sacrifices, sacred feasts and priesthood.

In the second part of the Prolegomena, this conclusion is sought to be verified by an examination of the historical books. These writings are assumed to have been colored and molded by the ideas of the age of their composition and revision; and this coloring and molding determine, then, when these ideas were prevalent. Chronicles is first examined. It is found to be the inevitable product of the conviction that the Mosaic law, the priestly code, is the starting of Israel's history, and that, in it, is operative a play of sacred forces such as finds no other analogy. At the time of its composition, then, the ideas of the priestly code were, so to speak, rampant; and, if they are not found in the earlier literature, this code naturally belongs to that period. An examination, now, of the earlier literature shows that this is the case. For though Judges, Samuel and Kings bear the marks of revision, yet this revision does not proceed on the assumption of the priestly code (that indeed seems to have been unknown), but on the basis of Deuteronomy. This indicates, then, that the priestly code was not in existence at the beginning of the exile. But these books contain also much material which does not harmonize with the Deuteronomic code, while it does with the Jehovistic. This, then, indicates a period when Deuteronomy was not in existence. It does not belong to the earliest stage of Israel's history. To arrive at these conclusions, the books are given a most thorough critical analysis. The narrative of the Hexateuch is investigated in a similar manner; and the difficult task is undertaken of unfolding and laying bare the parts belonging to different periods.

The third division, Israel and Judaism, discusses still further the composition of the Pentateuch, and shows the gradual development of the written law and the idea of the theocracy.

The views and arguments of this work are by no means original with its author, and he freely acknowledges his indebtedness to others; but to him belongs the credit of having stated them in a most significant and attractive way. This is really the work of a master-hand; and one cannot wonder that many scholars have felt its force and have adopted its conclusions. This work, however, as might already be inferred, is thoroughly rationalistic. It knows nothing of infallible inspiration, nothing of supernatural revelation. Its tone is far from reverent to those who receive the Old Testament as the word of God. Professor Wellhausen fits also the statements of Scripture to his theory with unwarranted ease, if not often with palpable misrepresentation, and ignores its difficulties with the proud assumption that it is the truth, and that all objections must down before it. His main underlying principle is a false one, i. e., that the usage and the acceptance of a form of worship must *necessarily* precede its existence in law. Such precedence is not necessary. Its necessity is contradicted by every movement in the Christian church to go back to the teachings of the New Testament. The value of this work is in the many facts of Scripture presented in a new light, which show the necessity of further and more exact and scientific study in the whole domain of Old Testament history. Professor Wellhausen and his coadjutors are doing the same for the Old Testament that Baur, and his school, did for the New. The course and outcome of their criticism also will be undoubtedly the same. The truth will be more fully known; and though received views may be modified, yet God's Word will be clarified and will shine more perfectly in the Law, the Prophets and the Scriptures.